

International

Newsletter

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Mayor's Office, City of Houston

Office of International Affairs & Development

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Message from the Mayor

2006 has been an incredible year for Houston. We are all very proud of our city's dynamic growth, and we are looking forward to a year filled with opportunities for further economic development, both through the formation of new international partnerships and the expansion of existing ones.



Bill White

This month, Shell Oil will host a high level delegation from Nigeria's oil sector, one of the many prospects for Houston's international development that 2007 holds in store. In the coming months, two of Houston's sister-cities, Tyumen, Russia, and Leipzig, Germany, also plan official visits, recognizing nearly two decades of partnership with our city.

As we once again return to work with the same intensity and business acumen for which we are known, I would like to wish all of you a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Bill White, Mayor

Message from the Director

With every passing year, Houston grows in prominence as an international city. We are renowned for our outward looking business spirit, the combination of experience and human resources that reside locally, and our strength in energy markets, health sciences, logistics, education and many other sectors.



Helen T. Chang

This past year was one of great change and growth for our city on the international scene, and the Mayor's Office of International Affairs and Development is proud to have played a significant role. We are pleased to share with you our Annual Report 2006, which details the activities and programs initiated and supported by this office.

As always, we thank you for your comments, feedback and support, and we will continue to serve you with great pride!

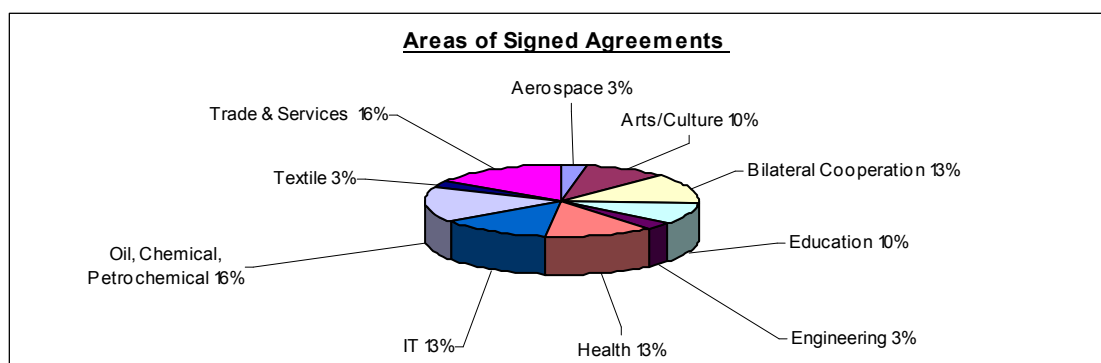
Helen T. Chang, Director

2006 Annual Report

To promote the city of Houston in the international arena, the MOIAD has focused its efforts on strengthening economic alliances and creating greater commercial opportunities for Houston-area businesses. In this annual report, we are proud to list the following accomplishments:

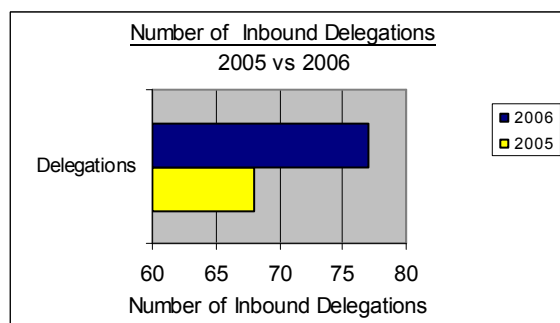
I. 31 International Cooperation Agreements

In 2006, 31 agreements were signed between Houston and other international cities, almost a 94% increase from the previous year.



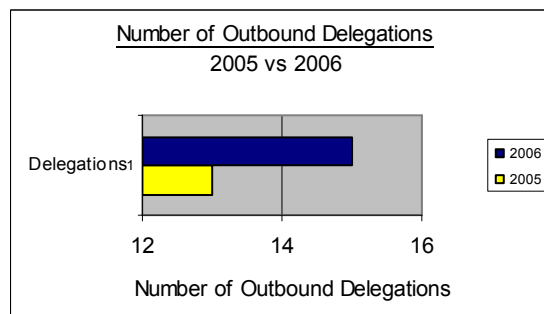
II. 79 Inbound Delegations

In 2006, the MOIAD coordinated and welcomed 79 international delegations from Argentina, Belize, Canada, China, France, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.



III. 15 Outbound Delegation

In 2006, the MOIAD initiated/supported 15 major outbound trade delegations to 11 cities: Beijing, Belize City, Calgary, Dalian, Milan, Moscow, Paris, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tampico and Xiamen, and two country visits to India and South Korea.



IV. Internship Program

The MOIAD has expanded its year-round internship program with Rice University and the University of Houston to also include the University of St. Thomas. In 2006, MOIAD trained a total of 16 interns through this Internship Program.

V. Other International Initiatives

The MOIAD has also assisted with many other international initiatives such as working on projects with the Asian Business Council and Chinese Community Center.



Upcoming Events

Russian Culture Center Opens Its Doors

The Russian Cultural Center will celebrate its grand opening with a photo exhibition on January 11. The Center will present some of the best works of Russian artists of all mediums and styles. For more information on this patrons' preview, please contact (713)-395-3301.

NAFTA: Creating Economic Integration In North America

On January 15, the Greater Houston Partnership will host an event focusing on NAFTA and the global trading system. The Assistant Secretary of Market Access and Compliance for the U.S. Department of Commerce, Mr. David Bohigian, will be the keynote speaker. The event will be held at the Houstonian Hotel. For more information, please call (713) 844-3636.

European Chambers of Commerce Luncheon

On January 19, several European chambers of commerce will co-host a luncheon at the Four Seasons Hotel where Mayor Bill White will be the keynote speaker. Mayor White will speak on Houston's role in the international arena, now and in the future. For more information, please contact www.iacctexas.com.

Week Long Celebration of Australian Events

Every year on January 26, Australians unite to celebrate their country. The Australian Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a week of events showcasing Australian lifestyle, commerce and culture, culminating in the Australia Day Gala on January 27 at Hotel Derek. For more information, please contact www.aacc.houston.org.

Vietnamese -American Chamber of Commerce Luncheon

On January 27, the Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce will host its first networking luncheon of the new year at Fung's Kitchen restaurant. The theme of this event will be "Houston's outlook for business leaders for 2007 and the years to come." For more information, please call (713)-981-9200.

Gypsy Passion with the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble

On January 31, the Society for the Performing Arts will host the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble in Jones Hall for a celebration of gypsy music and Hungarian folk dances. The 90-member ensemble performs for one night only in Jones Hall, as part of the UBS International Series. For more information, please visit www.spahouston.org.

Mayor's State of the City Address

On January 22, Mayor Bill White will deliver his 4th annual State of the City Address, hosted by the Greater Houston Partnership. Last year, the State of the City address drew a crowd of more than 1,400 attendants. This year, the luncheon forum will be held at the Hilton Americas hotel in downtown Houston, where local decision makers and businesses leaders will have a valuable networking opportunity while the mayor outlines what the city has accomplished in the past year and his plans for the future. For more information, please contact (713) 844-3682.

Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council (MIADC)

Every month we will bring you the latest updates regarding the developments of the MIADCs: Africa, Americas, Asia/Australia, Canada, Europe, Middle East/ North Africa and South Asia. The following are the most recent plans and activities of the seven regional councils.



Upcoming Meetings

Executive Board

Chair of the MIADC/ Executive Board, Mr. Alex Giannotti, has scheduled two meetings of the MIADC/ Executive Board, one on January 16, and the other January 29. For the January 16 meeting, Mr. Giannotti has invited all of the committee chairs from each of the seven MIADCs to discuss projects of joint interest to all councils. For the January 29 meeting, Mr. Giannotti has asked fellow board members to prepare an annual summary of each councils' activities.

Africa

The MIADC/ Africa will meet on January 26 in the Stumpf Boardroom in Greater Houston Convention & Visitor's Bureau (GHCVB). Topics for discussion will include fundraising initiatives and community support.

Canada

The MIADC/ Canada will meet on January 17, in the small conference room of the GHCVB, first floor of City Hall. Members intend to discuss progress reports on the council's various initiatives.

Recent Activities

Europe

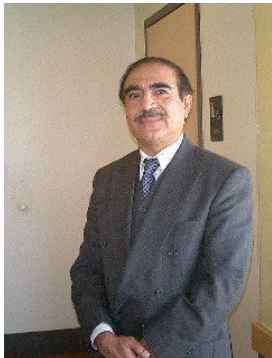
The MIADC/ Europe met on December 6 to discuss the members' international initiatives. Chair of the Business Development/ Marketing committee, Mr. Luciano Topi, announced the establishment of a study on Houston's business opportunities. The council invited two guests, the Deputy Consul Kirill Mihailov of the Russian Federation, and Mr. Alex Giannotti, chair of the MIADC Executive Board, to share in council discussions.

Promoting Houston: South Asia

MIADC/ South Asia member, Mr. Shaukat Khan, has traveled to India and has been actively promoting Houston in meetings with various government, business, cultural and entertainment figures, including His Excellency, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The International Relations committee supported Mr. Khan by overnight mailing promotional materials related to Houston's leading economic and educational sectors.

Pakistan

This month we visit a country in South Asia known for its greatly diverse landscape — extending from the Himalayas, the Hindukush and the Karakorams mountains in the North, to the Thar Desert in the southeast — to speak to the Honorable G. R. Baluch, Pakistan Consul General in Houston, to discuss topics ranging from trade relations to his professional goals in Houston.



Consul General G.R. Baluch

Pakistan, which has a rich cultural heritage, influenced by Central Asia, the Middle East and the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, is represented in Houston by the Honorable Consul General G. R. Baluch.

As a young man in Pakistan, Consul General Baluch was inspired to pursue a career in the Foreign Service due to his early interest in foreign relations. He believes that the only way to have a peaceful and prosperous world is through the continued interaction among states. At an early age he decided to become a part of the process: "I wanted to become a diplomat and contribute to the process of cooperation within the countries I would serve in, and that is my goal today", Consul General Baluch said.

Consul General Baluch's professional objective is to expand relations between Pakistan and Houston not only on an economical level but also through the creation of partnership opportunities between the two countries: "Houston's diversity, size, hospitality, welcoming, cost of living, and vibrant economy make it an ideal city to be engaged with" Consul General Baluch said.

The Consul General seeks to achieve his objective through various projects such as an Energy Conference, which will allow Pakistani and Houstonian energy experts to interface, and through an exhibition on Pakistani products, both of which are planned for 2007. Some of the products imported to Houston from Pakistan are basmati rice, spices, refreshments, bed linens, jeans, and textiles. In light of the strong economic and cultural relations between Houston and Pakistan, the Consul General says that he plans to further strengthen ties with Houston by brokering a sister-city agreement between Karachi and Houston.

Consul General Baluch has served in the Foreign Service for twenty five years and has been posted to countries such as Kuwait, Syria and Egypt. While in Houston, he rigorously dedicates his time to his profession and family while also taking the time to enjoy some of his personal hobbies such as reading books, exercising and riding horses. Consul General Baluch particularly enjoys the opportunities Houston offers in terms of interacting with different people and establishing long lasting friendships, "The diversity in its peoples, their warmth and welcoming make Houston an enjoyable place to live" Consul General Baluch said.

With increased interaction in the areas of cultural exchange, medical research and trade, it is no surprise that Consul General Baluch predicts a very bright future for Houston-Pakistan relations, "Between Houston and Pakistan the sky is the limit!."

-By Michelle Kneeland



Map of Pakistan

Did You Know?

According to the 2000 census, Pakistan is the 12th highest source of immigration into the United States. Pakistani-Americans are extremely well educated, with 54% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. 50,000 Pakistani-Americans live in Texas. Source: www.wikipedia.org

Connections Across the Globe:

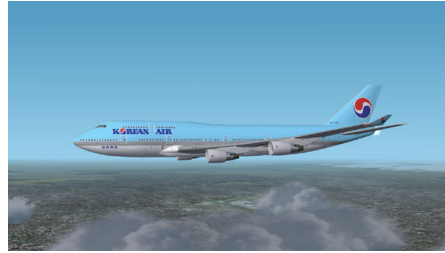
This month we track exciting developments taking place within Houston's Airport and Port systems

Houston Airport System (HAS)

Korean Air has announced it will begin an all-cargo service, twice a week, to Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) on January 25, 2007.

This new flight adds a second cargo destination in Asia for Houston in just three months. The flight will start with a leased 747-400F freighter aircraft. A Korean Air aircraft may be used later, depending on aircraft availability.

"This is great news for Houston's growing air cargo industry and our Korean-American community," said Rick Vacar, director of HAS. "We have been working with Korean Air for some time to make this new



Korean Air Cargo Service

flight a reality."

"We look forward to serving the Houston market and its growing business ties with Korea and Asia," Derek Han, vice president cargo Americas for Korean Air said. "Houston's dynamic business and logistics climate makes this an easy decision for us, and we expect a long and prosperous presence in Houston." Houston has strong economic and cultural ties to

South Korea, which is the city's 12th largest trading partner. Top exports to Korea include industrial equipment and computers, while imports from Korea include electrical machinery, equipment and parts.

Houston is the fastest-growing gateway for U.S. air exports (by weight) to South Korea in the primary southern catchment area – air exports originating in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Air cargo exports from this region exceed 5,000 tons a year.

—By Juan Alanis, Houston Airport System

Port of Houston Authority (PHA)

More than 150 guests attended a December 7th celebration at the South Shore Harbor Conference Center to honor environmentalist Richard "Dick" Gorini, after whom the nation's largest manmade marsh is named.

Gorini, the PHA's first environmental manager, successfully stewarded the building of a 200-acre marsh from dredge material dug from the Houston ship channel in Galveston Bay.

At the time, the "Demonstration Marsh" was the country's most ambitious project of its kind. The "soft opening" of the Port's Bayport Container Terminal took

place on December 8, 2006 with the docking and security clearance of the first container ship to berth at the new facility.

Fittingly, one of the world's most technologically advanced container ships became the first commercial vessel to call on one of the world's most advanced container terminals.

Bayport Container Terminal



The Bayport Container Terminal will have sufficient space to accommodate seven ships and a 378-acre container storage yard. The Terminal will be built out in demand-driven phases over the next 15 years. It is projected to be in full operation by mid January 2007 and a grand opening is planned for early February.

"We are all excited about the startup of operations at Bayport, which will prove to be a vital link in the global container cargo chain and a cornerstone of the regional economy," said Port Executive Director Ton Kornegay.

—By Mary Jane Wakefield

The Global Bridge: Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership

Each month the International Newsletter features "the Global Bridge" section, which introduces various local chambers of commerce dedicated to promoting Houston's international image.



For most local economic development organizations, the focus of their efforts ends at Houston's city limits. The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership (BAHEP) has a different approach. In addition to supporting Houston's economic growth it also represents the interests of nine other cities, Dickinson, Friendswood, Seabrook, Kemah, LaPorte, League City, Nassau Bay, Pasadena and Webster as well as two counties—Galveston and Harris.

Far from compromising the organization's efficacy, James Reinhartsen, BAHEP's president of economic development said that emphasizing a variety of cities, rather than only one, is beneficial for all concerned. In fact, according to BAHEP's 2006 annual report, in the past year, the organization's efforts resulted in 4800 new jobs, \$221 million in new salaries, more than \$1 million in training grants and \$454 million in new direct investments.

BAHEP's mission is twofold: To ensure that its member cities retain current jobs and expand existing businesses, and to recruit new industries, particularly in high-technology fields.

"It's all about the ABCs," Reinhartsen said. "Aerospace and avionics, Bio-industry and life sciences, and Chemicals and Commodities."

The organization supports local businesses in three main ways: By assisting companies in need of technical assistance, lobbying for the support of regional interests in Washington and directly

approaching companies seeking expansion or relocation and encouraging them to consider the Bay Area Houston region.

BAHEP's greatest success in the past year was, perhaps, the negotiation of a high-value technology contract with Lockheed-Martin. The company will use Houston as a base for the development of the Crew Expiration Vehicle, a replacement for the space shuttle. The contract will generate more than 1400 primary jobs for the region.



When recruiting new business, competition between the cities within the Bay Area Houston Region might be seen as detrimental, however, Reinhartsen insisted that it is vital to BAHEP's success.

Instead of approaching a company with a proposal from only one city, BAHEP approaches it with 10. According to Reinhartsen, this enables companies to "shop" for the city most in line with its needs. Although BAHEP member cities differ in demographics and economic base, they share access to excellent school-systems, universities and the arts. These along with the sheer convenience of the negotiation process makes companies far more likely to relocate to a BAHEP member city.

"If you believe that all ships rise on a high tide, you have to bring that philosophy into the discussion," Reinhartsen said. Regardless of which city a company chooses, the region benefits, he said, people cross city lines and so do the dollars they spend.

—By Sarah Clarke

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**Bill White
Mayor**

**Helen T. Chang
MOIAD Director**

**Matthew Shailer
Editor**

**Tiffany Ching
&
Mary Jane Wakefield
Assistant Editors**

**Sarah Clarke
Production Coordinator**

**Please send articles/
comments to
helen.chang@cityofhouston.net
Fax: (713) 247-2100**

**901 Bagby
City Hall, 4th Floor
Houston, Texas 77002
(713) 247-3595**

**Next Submission
Deadline:
January 20, 2007**

Event Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Venue/Contact	
January 2007				
Jan. 1-27	--	Australian American Chamber of Commerce: Celebration of Australia Events	Venue: Contact:	TBA www.aacc-houston.org
Jan. 4	7:30	Houston Networking News: Lead Exchange Breakfast	Venue: Contact:	Amazon Grill 281-778-6661
Jan. 9	7:45 am	Asia Society: <i>Asian Equity—Outlook for 2007, featuring Edward R. Allen III</i>	Venue: Contact:	Houston Club 713-439-0051
Jan. 10	11:30 am- 1:15 pm	Asian Chamber of Commerce: Monthly Luncheon featuring Karen Beth Glunz	Venue: Contact:	Westin Galleria Hotel www.asianchamber-hou.org
Jan. 10	11:30 am- 1:30 pm	Greater Houston Partnership: 2007 Annual Meeting	Venue: Contact	Hilton-Americas Houston 713-844-3682
Jan. 11	11:30 am	Petroleum Equipment Suppliers Association: Chairman James H. Lambright, Ex-Im Bank of the United States	Venue: Contact:	InterContinental Hotel 713-932-0168
Jan. 11	11:30 am	World Affairs Council of Houston: <i>Russia and the Rule of Law: A Perspective on the Trial of Mikhail Khordorkovsky</i>	Venue: Contact:	Hyatt Regency Hotel www.wachouston.org
Jan. 11	6:00 pm	World Affairs Council of Houston: <i>Fractured Alliance—The U.S. and Turkey after the Invasion of Iraq</i>	Venue: Contact:	The Junior League www.wachouston.org
Jan. 13	6:00 pm	Japan-America Society of Houston: New Year's Dinner	Venue: Contact:	Teppay Restaurant jash@jashouston.org
Jan. 14	—	Chevron Houston Marathon	Venue: Contact:	Downtown Houston www.houstonmarathon.com
Jan.15-17	—	Shell Oil Corporation: Senatorial Delegation from Nigeria	Venue: Contact	TBD karl.williams@shell.com
Jan. 15	Noon	Greater Houston Partnership: NAFTA—Creating Economic Integration in North America	Venue: Contact	Houstonian Hotel 713-844-3636
Jan. 15	—	Martin Luther King Jr. Grand Parade	Venue: Contact:	Downtown Houston www.mlkgrandeparade.org
Jan. 15	5:30 pm- 7:00 pm	Baker Hostetler, Greater Houston Partnership & PKF Texas: Networking Reception Honoring the District Export Council	Venue: Contact:	Houstonian Hotel 713-860-1464
Jan. 17	6:00 pm	World Affairs Council of Houston: <i>The Shia Revival—How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future</i>	Venue: Contact:	The Junior League www.wachouston.org
Jan. 18	7:00 am- 6:30 pm	UK Trade & Investment at the British Consulate and the Greater Houston Partnership: <i>Emerging Opportunities in Global Emissions Trading—Creating Value, Managing Risk</i>	Venue: Contact:	The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas- Houston Branch Joanne.howard@fco.gov.uk

Date	Time	Event	Venue/Contact	
Jan. 18	10:00 am-Noon	Japan-America Society of Houston: Ikebana Classes	Venue: Contact:	Tachibana Center jash@jashouston.org
Jan. 19	Noon	Italy America Chamber of Commerce and the French American Chamber of Commerce: <i>Houston—International City, The Future</i>	Venue: Contact:	Four Seasons Hotel www.iacctexas.com
Jan. 20	7:00 pm-9:30 pm	2007 Houston Chinese New Year Performance Show	Venue: Contact:	Cullen Performance Hall 832-515-7582
Jan. 22	11:30 am	Indo-American Chamber of Commerce: BMC Software Distinguished Lecture featuring Larry Kellner, CEO of Continental Airlines	Venue: Contact:	Westin Hotel www.iaccgh.com
Jan. 22	Noon-1:30 pm	Greater Houston Partnership: State of the City Address, 2007	Venue: Contact:	Hilton Americas-Houston 713-844-3682
Jan. 23	Noon-1:30 pm	World Affairs Council of Houston: <i>Latin America's New Year</i>	Venue: Contact:	The Westin Oaks www.wachouston.org
Jan. 25	6:00 pm–9:30 pm	Offshore Engineering Conferences and Events and Shell Oil: Offshore Energy Achievement Awards III	Venue: Contact:	Houston Museum of Natural Science 713-535-1524
Jan. 26	10:00 am-1:00 pm	Japan-America Society of Houston: Contemporary Japanese Cooking Class	Venue: Contact	Museum District jash@jashouston.org
Jan. 26	6:30 pm-8:30 pm	Consulate General of India: 58 th Republic Day Celebration	Venue: Contact:	Hotel Hilton 713-626-2148
Jan. 27	7:00 pm	Australian American Chamber of Commerce: Australia Day Gala	Venue: Contact:	Hotel Derek www.aacc-houston.org
Jan. 27	11:30 am-1:00 pm	Houston's Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce: Monthly Networking Luncheon	Venue: Contact:	Fung's Kitchen 713-981-9200
Jan. 28	1:30 pm-3:00 pm	India Culture Center, Houston: India—Fair 2007	Venue: Contact:	India Culture Center www.icchouston.org
Jan. 30	8:00 am-2:00 pm	White House Initiative for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: NEXT Conference	Venue: Contact	Little Saigon Radio Conference Center jlee@aapi.gov
Jan. 30	6:30 pm-7:30 pm	World Affairs Council of Houston: <i>The Evolving Threat to National Security</i>	Venue: Contact:	The Westin Oaks www.wachouston.org
Jan. 31	8:00 pm	Society for the Performing Arts: <i>An Evening of Gypsy Passion with the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble</i>	Venue: Contact	Jones Hall www.spahouston.org

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